

## New Minister at First Parish Church

First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist voted on Sunday, May 9, to call Reverend Catherine Cullen of Duxbury as the next settled minister to this historic congregation that was first gathered in 1632.

Reverend Cullen was called by a vote of the church membership, in accordance with church bylaws, at a special meeting of the Parish following the Sunday service. She will officially begin her ministerial duties at First Parish on August 1.

Reverend Cullen is currently completing a two-year term as Interim Minister at The Unitarian Universalist Church of South County, Rhode Island. Before taking the interim position at South County, she served as the summer minister for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Reading. She completed a two-year part-time internship at First Parish, Brewster. She is noted for having a strong pastoral presence, which was strengthened through four chaplaincy internships at hospitals and health care facilities. Reverend Cullen also has a



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passion for justice and social action, which she brings to ministry from her previous career in the legal arena. Before she was called to the ministry, she worked for more than 20 years as an attorney, and has sat on many non-profit boards and contributed time and energy to a variety of social action programs.

Reverend Cullen, who has lived in Duxbury for three years, is married to David Cutler, the publisher of the *Duxbury Clipper*. They are parents to a blended family of six children. Most of their children are grown; their nine-year-old daughter Becky still lives at home with them.

Reverend Robert Walsh, who was Minister at First Parish for 23 years, retired in January 2003. Reverend Rosemarie Smurzynski of Arlington has served as Interim Minister for the past year and a half while a nine-member search committee worked to find the next settled minister for First Parish.

"We started with an initial list of nearly 30 ministers who expressed an interest in First Parish, but the list of candidates who matched our criteria was certainly smaller," said Fred Stevens, chair of the search committee. "We chose several candidates we wanted to meet personally, and they came from across the United States. We interviewed them thoroughly and listened to them long and hard, and we traveled to other churches to hear them preach. And when it was time to make our selec-

tion, we easily reached consensus that the candidate who would make the best minister for First Parish was right in our backyard."

Reverend Cullen led the May 2 worship service at First Parish, then spent a week meeting the congregation in a series of potluck dinners and lunches, committee

meetings and informal gatherings. She also met with church staff and visited several home-bound members. The week culminated in a second service, when Reverend Cullen preached at the Sunday service on May 9, following a procedure recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association.